

# County of San Luis Obispo

## Department of Veterans Services

Veterans Memorial Building, 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408  
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**Dana M. Cummings**  
VETERANS SERVICES OFFICER

### For Immediate Release

## San Luis Obispo County Veterans Stand Down May 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

San Luis Obispo County has a growing number of homeless. In 2011, approximately 4,000 people fell into this category. It is estimated that 10% of those are chronically homeless Veterans and hundreds more are at risk. The "Stand Down" concept is all about Americans helping Americans... San Luis Obispo County will be hosting a Stand Down at the Veterans Memorial Building at 801 Grand Avenue from 6 PM on May 18th to 4 PM on May 19th. Sleeping arrangements will be provided for up to 40 Veterans that wish to stay overnight and it is expected that 100 will attend that Sunday.

### What is a Stand Down?

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefields to a place of relative security and safety. Today, Stand Down refers to a community-based intervention program designed to help the nation's estimated 200,000 homeless Veterans "combat" life on the streets.

For the homeless and at-risk Veteran and their families in San Luis Obispo County and elsewhere, life on the streets is debilitating at best. Suffering from lack of shelter, unemployment, physical and emotional disabilities, and lack of food, the homeless and at-risk Veteran often feels completely isolated from mainstream society and unable to break out of the self-perpetuating cycle of homelessness. For those who do seek assistance, many are unable to access the help they need because the services required are spread out over a wide geographic area. This means homeless Veterans must exert undue time and energy going from one agency to another. Frustration often results. Imagine how the Veteran feels knowing he or she has given so much for their country and yet find themselves scraping for food. In assisting our Veterans who are homeless we realize that sometimes it takes just one small service for them to break out of the cycle of homelessness, such as needing a photo identification card, a bus token, a pair of shoes to start a new job, or not having any funds to pay for their fines that compounds into a bench warrant.

The San Luis Obispo County Stand Down will offer access to a wide range of services over a short period of time. These services included medical and dental attention, employment counseling, mental health services, legal services and advice, haircuts, showers, food, clothing, pet care and more. The Stand down is a team effort involving many local providers including; The Vet Center, CHC, Red Cross, American Legion, Goodwill, VFW, SLO Libraries and many more.

"It is our desire to offer these Veterans a safe environment that will encourage and assist them in finding their place in a community they swore their life to defend" said Dana Cummings the San Luis Obispo County Veterans Service Officer.

Veterans are encouraged to pre-register through the local Veterans Services office at 801 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA. Volunteers are needed and donations are greatly appreciated, if interested please contact the San Luis Obispo County Veterans Services Office at 805-781-5766 also email Travis Rochelle [trochelle@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:trochelle@co.slo.ca.us) and Dilah Laird [dilahlaird@gmail.com](mailto:dilahlaird@gmail.com). Please also visit our website at [slovets.org](http://slovets.org) for the most up to date information.